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ABSTRACT

A report on the integrity of higher education concludes that public confidence in higher education has eroded in recent years, due to both internal and external problems. The ethical behavior of educators can and should be called into question whenever breaches of conduct occur, such as: plagiarism by both teachers and students; exploitation by faculty and administrators of graduate students and teaching assistants; "double-dipping" by academic professionals from several grant sources for the same labors performed; undisclosed selling of identical scholarly works to more than one publication; institutional acquiescence to groups who would deny open discourse on controversial subjects; denial of information by college administrators to faculty and students; faculty departures from rigorous peer appraisal of colleagues; conflicts of interests between teaching, consulting and publishing endeavors; grade inflation; and the unjustified imposition of prerequisites. Each of these breaches of ethical conduct jeopardizes the freedom and integrity of academic institutions everywhere, especially in the eyes of the public and governmental regulators. Over 30 recommendations for improving the ethical conduct of academic institutions are proposed for institutions, faculty, students, and government officials. Careful monitoring of academic requirements, financial resources, student enrollments and accreditation policies is suggested. A summary list of the background papers used is provided, as is a list of assembly participants. (DC)

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THE INTEGRITY OF HIGHER EDUCATION

FIFTY-SIXTH AMERICAN ASSEMBLY
MARCH 29–APRIL 1, 1979
ARDEN HOUSE, HARRIMAN, N.Y.

The American Assembly
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The volume *Disorders in Higher Education* (eds. Bolman & Walton), containing the chapters described on the next page, will appear in public print in summer, 1979, and may be ordered from the publisher, Prentice-Hall, Inc., Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey 07632.

PREFACE

On March 29, 1979, 66 Americans from 20 states and the District of Columbia gathered at Arden House, Harriman, N.Y., for the Fifty-sixth American Assembly—*The Integrity of Higher Education.* They represented the college and university world (presidents, deans, professors, and trustees), the legal profession (bench and bar), government (state and federal), communications, business, foundations, and service organizations. For three days they discussed the response of our colleges and universities to internal and external pressures on their governance process and the effect of that response on their moral and intellectual integrity. They heard addresses by Arthur R. Taylor, chairman of The American Assembly; by U.S. Congressman John Brademas, House majority whip; by President Harold L. Enarson of Ohio State University; and a panel discussion with Professors James O'Toole of U.S.C., John W. Chapman of Pitt, and Richard Johnson of the Exxon Education Foundation. On the fourth day in plenary session they reviewed the statement which follows.

Background papers for the discussions were prepared under the editorial supervision of Dr. Clarence C. Walton, former president of Catholic University and Dr. Frederick deW. Bolman, former president of Franklin and Marshall College. Authors and chapters are:

Richard E. Anderson	*The Money Crunch*
Carl Kaysen	*The Growing Power of Government*
Lloyd H. Elliott	*The University and Special Interest Groups*
Richard M. Cyert	*Governance and Administration of the University*
Roy E. Licklider	*Faculty Ethics in an Academic Depression*
Willard F. Enteman	*The Integrity of the Student: A Normative Approach*
Elizabeth T. Kennan	*The Curriculum*
Clarence C. Walton	*Reflections (or Fantasies?) on the University*

The American Assembly, a national, nonpartisan educational forum, takes no stand on matters it presents for public discussion. The findings on these pages are those of the participants in their private capacities, and no one should associate any recommendations herein with any one organization or agency, public or private.

Clifford C. Nelson
President
The American Assembly

FINAL REPORT

of the

FIFTY-SIXTH AMERICAN ASSEMBLY

At the close of their discussions the participants in the Fifty-sixth American Assembly on *The Integrity of Higher Education*, at Arden House, Harriman, New York, March 29-April 1, 1979, reviewed as a group the following statement. The statement represents general agreement; however, no one was asked to sign it. Furthermore it should not be assumed that every participant subscribes to every recommendation.

PREFACE

American higher education has long and effectively served the nation by advancing and disseminating knowledge. It has also developed abilities to be critical of its own performance. In the spirit of continued national service and of criticism this Assembly now speaks to the general public and to educators themselves on matters which will safeguard and improve the ability of higher education to serve the nation.

Public confidence in American higher education has been eroded in recent years. Consensus on what constitutes legitimate higher education has been reduced, and expectations of it—and claims for it—have not been fulfilled. Financial resources and enrollments will not grow appreciably and, in fact, probably will decline.

These conditions create an urgent need to deal with problems that are both internal and external to the academic community. Failure to address the problems forthrightly and imaginatively will have serious negative effects on the integrity of universities and colleges.

Public Perceptions

A certain malaise affects higher education. The public correctly or incorrectly believes that there is waste in its universities and colleges; they hear of tenure and conclude that it has become a

job-security device for both the incompetent as well as the competent; they read inflated claims regarding faculty and curriculum only to find that one study program is like another; they suspect that collective bargaining will impair collegiality, drive up costs, and lead to prolonged strikes; they see statistics showing that graduates cannot get jobs they were led to expect while, at the same time, institutions recruit vigorously for students; they ask whether the admission of ill-prepared students or of foreign students is not simply a device to fill classrooms in order to justify state appropriations or to produce tuition revenue; they find too few minority students in programs which give access to the professions and prepare for influential roles in the total society; they fear that affirmative action is only a promissory note with no appreciable advance for minorities and women within the academy itself.

The foregoing issues and developments all lead to public questioning of the integrity of the university and college.

Inside Realities

Higher education itself is equally troubled. To be sure, the ethical behavior of educators may be neither better nor worse than that exhibited in the other professions. Perceived error causes demand for correction. Academic life carries for its members obligations of personal conduct (by trustees and administrators, faculty and students) that lift expectations of behavior beyond the ordinary. Unfortunately there are breaches of ethical conduct. Examples include: plagiarism by both teachers and students; exploitation by faculty and administrators of graduate students and teaching assistants; "double-dipping" by academic professionals from several grant sources for the same labors performed; undisclosed selling of identical scholarly works to more than one publication; the abject submission by institutions to groups who would deny open discourse on controversial subjects of interest to the campus community; withholding by college administrators of information that rightfully belongs to faculty and students; faculty departures from rigorous peer appraisal of colleagues; conflicts of interest among teaching, consulting, and publishing; grade inflation and unwarranted recommendations for students; and the unjustified imposition of prerequisites.

There are many reasons why we should act promptly. In the first place, professors often act as critics of a society which grants substantial protections for this function. Such criticism will be ill-received if the professors' own house is in intellectual and moral disarray. Second, while instances of irresponsible behavior may be exceptional, the irresponsibilities of the few tarnish the good name of all. A third factor is that persistent irregularities may lead to yet greater abuses. Fourth, inaction from within will trigger greater control by public authorities. Fifth, all university and college personnel, by their practices and their conduct, may so profoundly affect the intellectual and moral development of the young that even seemingly minor departures from integrity cannot be tolerated.

The time to act is now. We propose, therefore, the following:

RECOMMENDATIONS

Institutions

1. Institutions should state their goals explicitly and devise methods for periodic reporting of both their accomplishments and shortcomings to the public as related to those goals.

2. Each academic institution should be explicit about the standards of ethical behavior expected of its trustees, administrators, faculty, staff, and students.

3. In addition to academic audits, major efforts are required of every institution to provide accurate and complete information on such things as finances, investment policies, facilities, and percentage of full-time faculty.

4. An institution should avoid spreading its resources too thinly. Further, to respond effectively to changing conditions, an institution must be prepared to change departmental and any other structures if they become dysfunctional, to modify curricula, and to experiment with teaching methods that depart from traditional practices.

5. In the face of declining enrollments, institutions must plan and implement, individually and cooperatively, actions to reduce the size and cost of their operations, without jeopardizing academic quality and access to higher education.

6. Greater institutional safeguards must be developed for administrators who exercise courageous leadership to prevent organizational inertia and intrusions by self-serving groups.

7. Universities and colleges must be concerned with the declining quality of primary and secondary education. Required are closer articulation between secondary and college programs, upgrading of entrance requirements, and provision of appropriate remedial work for students admitted to degree programs.

8. College credits should not be given for remedial programs.

9. Curricula and faculty of satellite or off-campus activities and of nontraditional programs should be of no lesser quality than campus programs. Formal mechanisms are required to assure quality control.

10. Credit for life and work experience should be given only to individuals who have shown through rigorous examination that they meet the standards required of regularly matriculated students.

11. Higher education must strengthen and reinforce the existing processes of regional accreditation as one important means for self-regulation.

12. Specialized licensing boards and professional organizations have an important role in helping to determine proficiency levels for professional certification. However, attempts by such groups to prescribe admissions policy, curricula and course content, institutional structure, or faculty salaries must be resisted.

13. Institutions must resist current pressures to distort general, liberal undergraduate education by the introduction of excessive vocationalism or professionalism.

14. Institutions that are narrowly vocational or professional should not represent themselves as providers of liberal education; conversely, liberal arts colleges should not claim to prepare students for a specific vocation.

15. Efforts should be made to counter premature specialization in undergraduate education. Exposure to more than one discipline, to multidisciplinary courses, to foreign languages, and to international studies is of positive value in undergraduate education. In addition, reward systems should be designed to

encourage the teaching of general education courses.

Faculty

16. Each institution should provide resources to support the professional development of faculty, midcareer retraining of faculty, and retirement planning.

17. In light of its particular circumstances, each university and college should provide for a periodic review of faculty performance, including assessments of the teaching ability and scholarship of tenured professors.

18. In the face of declining demand for young faculty, methods should be found to encourage, develop, and employ the next generation of scholars.

19. Because unionization is frequently destructive of the collegiality and academic standards essential to institutional integrity, faculty should, wherever possible, direct their efforts toward achieving effective participation in institutional governance by other means.

20. Positive steps must be taken to increase the employment of the number of qualified women, blacks, and members of other minority groups in teaching and in high-level administrative positions.

21. Higher education must oppose those who would render the academic environment inhospitable to the critical examination of all views and opinions, no matter how popular or unpopular. Further, the curriculum cannot be subverted to serve the purposes of special interest groups whose goals run counter to the purposes of liberal learning.

Students

22. Colleges and universities should not misrepresent their course offerings, the job prospects for graduates, the participation of senior faculty in regular instruction, their facilities, or other aspects of academic programs.

23. If it is to remain ethically sensitive toward students, each institution must provide effective mechanisms to prevent the exploitation or favored treatment of students who, for example, participate in the performing arts, in intercollegiate competition, or in faculty-student research.

24. Universities should provide more effective personal, academic, and career counselling.

25. For future members of the academic profession, specific attention should be given to the development of teaching skills as part of graduate school programs.

Government

26. Public institutions and appropriate funding agencies of higher education should assume leadership in developing new methods of funding which will give recognition not only to enrollment levels, but also to the maintenance of the quality of institutional missions in both the public and private sectors.

27. Methods of funding higher education should be found that foster pluralism by preserving the public and private educational system.

28. Although higher education is not exempt from laws passed to promote general social objectives, application of regulations primarily designed for other institutions is sometimes inappropriate. Consequently, higher education must present to federal and state agencies its case for modification of regulations.

29. In both funding programs and regulatory practices, government should safeguard and strengthen the integrity of higher education, recognizing that academic freedom, institutional self-direction, and sovereignty are essential to open inquiry and a liberal society.

30. Government policy-makers and administrators should try to understand the distinctive character of colleges and universities: their unique decision-making style, their slowness to change, their vulnerability to disruption, their susceptibility to distortions caused by sudden fluctuations in financial support, and their reluctance to be controlled from outside.

31. Wherever possible, government should entrust higher education with responsibility to regulate itself. New methods should be devised—and old ones repaired—by which the academic community can be relied upon to account for the ethical and fiduciary behavior of its own members.

32. The integrity of higher education could be threatened by centralized control. For that reason, establishment of a national department of education, at least in the forms recently discussed and currently considered, would not enhance that integrity and could well diminish it.

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ABOUT THE AMERICAN ASSEMBLY

The American Assembly was established by Dwight D. Eisenhower at Columbia University in 1950. It holds nonpartisan meetings and publishes authoritative books to illuminate issues of United States policy.

An affiliate of Columbia, with offices in the Graduate School of Business, the Assembly is a national, educational institution incorporated in the State of New York.

The Assembly seeks to provide information, stimulate discussion, and evoke independent conclusions on matters of vital public interest.

American Assembly Sessions

At least two national programs are initiated each year. Authorities are retained to write background papers presenting essential data and defining the main issues of each subject.

A group of men and women representing a broad range of experience, competence, and American leadership meet for several days to discuss the Assembly topic and consider alternatives for national policy.

All Assemblies follow the same procedure. The background papers are sent to participants in advance of the Assembly. The Assembly meets in small groups for four or five lengthy periods. All groups use the same agenda. At the close of these informal sessions participants adopt in plenary session a final report of findings and recommendations.

Regional, state, and local Assemblies are held following the national session at Arden House. Assemblies have also been held in England, Switzerland, Malaysia, Canada, the Caribbean, South America, Central America, the Philippines, and Japan. Over one hundred thirty institutions have cosponsored one or more Assemblies.

Arden House

Home of the American Assembly and scene of the national sessions is Arden House, which was given to Columbia University in 1950 by W. Averell Harriman. E. Roland Harriman joined his brother in contributing toward adaptation of the property for conference purposes. The buildings and surrounding land, known as the Harriman Campus of Columbia University, are 50 miles north of New York City.

Arden House is a distinguished conference center. It is self-supporting and operates throughout the year for use by organizations with educational objectives. The American Assembly is a tenant of this Columbia University facility only during Assembly sessions.

AMERICAN ASSEMBLY BOOKS

The background papers for each Assembly program are published as cloth and paperbound books; the conclusions of the Assemblies, in pamphlets. These studies are put to use by individuals, libraries, businesses, public agencies, nongovernmental organizations, educational institutions, discussion and service groups. In that way the deliberations of Assembly sessions are continued and extended.

American Assembly Books:

1951—U.S.-Western Europe Relationships
1952—Inflation
1953—Economic Security for Americans
1954—The U.S. Stake in the U.N.
—The Federal Government Service (revised 1965)
1955—United States Agriculture
—The Forty-eight States (State Government)
1956—The Representation of the United States Abroad (revised 1964)
—The United States and the Far East (revised 1962)
1957—International Stability and Progress
—Atoms for Power
1958—The United States and Africa (revised 1963)
—United States Monetary Policy (revised 1964)
1959—Wages, Prices, Profits and Productivity
—The United States and Latin America (revised 1963)
1960—The Federal Government and Higher Education
—The Secretary of State
1961—Arms Control: Issues for the Public
—Outer Space: Prospects for Man and Society (revised 1968)
1962—Automation and Technological Change
—Cultural Affairs and Foreign Relations (revised 1968)
1963—The Population Dilemma (revised 1969)
—The United States and the Middle East
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—The Congress and America's Future (revised 1973)
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—Overcoming World Hunger
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